

## APRIL 2011 SPEAKER – EARL ARBONEAUX

Speaker for the April 2011 meeting was Earl Arboneaux, a member of LPS, who demonstrated his photographic technique and explained his philosophy. Arboneaux, a native of Napoleonville and current resident of Greenwell Springs, has been engaged in digital photography for eight years. His passion for images came through his love of nature, initially experienced when fishing on Lake Verret and in the Atchafalaya Spillway.

His thought dominating his theme “Field of Dreams,” is that a photographer must not only see things, but see them in a way that would not occur to the casual viewer — “not just what you see, but how you see it.” He is almost entirely self-taught, but with “lots of solid advice from good photographers.” He relies on articles and books by great nature and bird photographers such as John Shaw and Arthur Morris and applies their advice. Inspiration alone is not enough for quality — composition rules, such as the rule of thirds, balance, attention to shadows and highlights, and good equipment, including good lenses, were essential for his improvement. His job involved creativity, and he applies this experience to visualize photo images. He underexposes his images slightly, to avoid blown out highlights and tries to capture the final image in the camera rather than in post-processing.

His advice for “Creating Better Photographs” centered on six themes:

1. “Simplify.” Don’t try to include everything in an image of a busy scene. Isolate your subject. His example was an orchid at a busy flower show.
2. “Create an Anchor Point.” Decide on a focal point that will lead the mind’s eye in the direction in which you want it to travel.
3. “Create Depth.” Enhancing the illusion of depth in what is essentially a flat image will improve a photograph’s quality and interest. He demonstrated this with a photo of buildings with converging outer vertical lines.
4. “Balance the Photograph.” Although your central subject should be off center, following the rule of thirds, there should also be some background element to add balance and help to fill the frame of the photo.
5. “Zoom In.” Get close to the subject, either physically or by using a telephoto lens, especially true in bird and nature photography.
6. “Communicate Your Vision Through Creativity.” Look beyond a mere scene for patterns, colors, quality of light, and depth within the scene.

Arboneaux has created numerous photo-books using his photographs, including subjects such as flowers, New Orleans, and various national parks. He ended with two slide shows, “Nature’s Glory,” and “Tears of God,” the latter being images of Civil War reenactments.

By Bob Connell